



Golden State Advantage Bulletin

ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER (EBT) PROJECT

November 2002

www.ebtproject.ca.gov



Go-Live!

That's right! More counties will Go-Live November 15 and November 18. Contra Costa, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma Counties will become fully operational December 1.

EBT STATISTICS—OCTOBER 2002

- ◆ Food Stamps: 26,421 cases, \$4.8 million in benefits.
- ◆ Cash: 22,354 cases, \$9.3 million in benefits.
- ◆ Food Stamps: 185,112 approved transactions, \$4.7 million in benefits.
- ◆ Cash: 90,628 approved cash transactions, \$9.3 million in benefits.
- ◆ Food Stamps: redeemed at 1,426 retail locations.
- ◆ Cash: accessed at 1,051 POS locations and redeemed \$2.5 million in benefits.
- ◆ Cash: accessed at 1,938 different ATM locations, redeeming \$6.7 million in benefits.
- ◆ Average fees paid per cash household: \$1.91, down \$.17 since August.
- ◆ 27% of all ATMs are surcharge free.
- ◆ 52% of cash benefits are withdrawn at surcharge free ATMs.
- ◆ The number of retail locations serving clients has increased each month, which indicates a robust redemption network supporting varied shopping patterns. Cash transactions have increased in retail locations, while ATM transactions have declined.
- ◆ Clients made 71,522 calls to the Customer Service ARU. 3,261 clients calls were received by Customer Service Representatives.
- ◆ Client Customer Service calls have decreased throughout pilot and are currently averaging 2.66 per household.

EBT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

Counties currently engaged in EBT readiness or Planning & Installation (in order of implementation) are: Orange, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Merced, Stanislaus, Fresno, Riverside, San Joaquin, Tulare, Los Angeles, Imperial, Kern, Marin, and Napa. Implementation in Fresno County begins May 2003.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

As a customer service initiative, the U.S. Postal Service plans to begin accepting EBT cards in the first quarter of 2003. Downloading of the new EBT capable software will begin in mid-November 2002. After a brief test period, downloads will continue to all 33,000 post offices nationwide. It is anticipated downloads will be completed to all 67,000 postal (credit card) terminals by late January 2003.

The U.S. Postal Service will offer cash back with an EBT purchase, the same as is currently offered with online debit card purchases. The Postal Service will allow customers to withdraw up to \$50 cash, in \$10 increments, from their EBT benefit account when purchasing postal products and services with an EBT card.

EBT STATE IMPLEMENTATION ROUND TABLE

Over 120 people from 18 counties and welfare organizations attended the State EBT Project Round Table on September 25, 2002. The objective of the all-day Round Table was to share information on the challenges, opportunities and lessons learned based on the experiences in the pilot counties. The EBT Project covered topics including EBT technology and the eligibility system, data cleansing, client conversion/card issuance, staff training, benefit access, going live on EBT, and on-going operations.

The Round Table was comprised of presentations covering the above mentioned topics followed by a panel question and answer period with representatives from Alameda and Yolo Counties, Citicorp Electronic Financial Services (CEFS), and the State EBT Project Team. An informal survey of attendees indicated that much valuable knowledge was passed from the pilot counties to counties who will soon implement EBT. The intent is to have three or four similar Round Table meetings for the remaining counties. Dates to be determined.